

E. P. Figg Building  
224 J Street  
Sacramento, Sacramento County  
California

HABS No. CAL-1713

HABS  
CAL  
34-SAC  
13.

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Western Office, Division of Design and Construction  
450 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, California

PHOTOGRAPH-DATA BOOK REPORT  
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CAL-1713  
Page 1

E. P. FIGG BUILDING

Sacramento, Sacramento County, California

ADDRESS: 224 J Street, between Second and Third Streets  
OWNER: Redevelopment Agency of the City of Sacramento  
OCCUPANT: Now Vacant; building to be removed to permit  
construction of a Freeway  
USE: Until recently used as hotel and bar.

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The E. P. Figg Building, erected in 1852 by E. P. Figg, a pioneer wholesale commission merchant, at a cost of \$22,000, was among the early brick structures built immediately after the major fire. In this historical area was located the terminal of the Pony Express, 1860-61, and it was here that construction of the Central Pacific Railroad began in 1863.

DESCRIPTIVE ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

EXTERIOR

The E. P. Figg Building, with two stories and a basement, has fire-proof exterior brick walls. It is 161' long and 22'-0" to 24'-5" wide. The brick walls of the front, rear and exposed sides are covered with exterior plaster. The front facade is one of the more decorative examples built in this area during the early fifties. The lower story has two cast-iron pilasters of Ionic order with a cast-iron lintel beam which supports the masonry walls of the upper

CAL-1713  
Page 2

facade. The face of the lintel is decorated with a broad architrave, egg-and-dart moulding and moulded cornice, and with a triglyph-like cast-iron element over each of the pilasters. The present entrances are greatly changed and are not significant.

The double-hung windows of the second story have projecting pedimented tops and under the sills there are ornate relief decorations executed in plaster work. Similar plaster work is used on the relief decoration centering on the moulded band above the windows. Between the windows there are large ornately decorated medallions of relief plaster work.

This decorative moulded plaster work is somewhat damaged in parts, but it still indicates the remarkable skill of the art of the designer-craftsman who produced it. It was apparently formed with successive layers of sand-lime plaster reinforced with layers of burlap, and in some places projects  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " or more.

The original roof, essentially level, was supported by 3x10 wood joists over which was laid 1x12 rough sheathing. On this was laid a common brick course, 2-3/8" thick, set in sand-lime mortar. The bricks were topped with  $\frac{1}{2}$ " of mortar and then covered with sheet metal applied with interlocked seams. This produced a "fireproof" roof which would resist flying sparks from adjacent fires.

This original roof is still in place, but in later years self-supporting wood trusses were erected above this roof and these were covered with wood sheathing and built-up roofing. Roof monitors and skylights were also later additions.

#### INTERIOR

The interior has been greatly altered; little of the original interior finish remains on the first floor. A single run stair leads to the second floor where the partitions have been modified but the wainscot and paneled doors of the hall are apparently part of the original installation.

The basement has 4x6 posts down the center of the building supporting the first floor joists. The basement floor is now concrete.

CAL-1713  
Page 3

## TECHNICAL ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### GENERAL

Condition of Building: Sound structure, modified facade

Overall Plan Size: 23'-6" wide (average), 161'-0" long

No. of Stories: Basement and two stories

### EXTERIOR

Foundation: Brick

Wall Construction: Brick, load-bearing walls

Piers, Columns, etc.:

Basement - 4x6 wood columns

Front facade - cast-iron pilasters

Openings:

Doorways & Doors - wood, not original

Windows - double-hung wood on upper floors

Roof:

Shape - original - flat, brick, metal-covered  
present - low pitched

Covering - built-up composition

Framing - original - 3"x10" wood joists  
present - wood truss

Skylights - wood-framed skylights

Wall Finish:

CAL-1713  
Page 4

Front facade - plaster over brick

Sides and rear - exposed brick work

Cornice, Decorative Elements, etc.:

Cornice - brick, plaster covered

Relief ornament - sand-lime plaster reinforced with burlap

INTERIOR

Floor Plans:

Basement - 4x6 wood posts down center

First Floor - wood partitions remodelled - not significant

Second Floor - wood partitions remodeled - not significant

Stairways: Wood, single run

Floor Construction and Flooring:

Basement - concrete, not original

First Floor - wood flooring over 3"x9" wood joists

Second Floor - wood flooring over 3"x10" wood joists

Wall & Ceiling Finish: Plastered walls

Doorways & Doors: Wood, panelled

Trim: Wood wainscot in second floor corridor

SITE

The building is located on the south side of J Street between Second and Third Streets and extends to the alley. Built at the original

CAL-1713  
Page 5

lower level, this and other buildings were elevated in the early 1860's when the street levels were raised; the alley remained at the original level. The basement floor of the E. P. Figg Building is near the alley level.

#### REFERENCES

Old Sacramento, by Carroll D. Hall and Hero E. Rensch, California Division of Beaches and Parks, Sacramento, California 1958.

Old Sacramento Inventory of Historical Buildings, Western Heritage Inc., California Division of Beaches and Parks, Sacramento, California 1962.

Prepared by,

*Melvin M. Rotsch*

Melvin M. Rotsch, Professor  
Texas A&M University  
Summer Supervisory Architect, HABS

August 1964

APPROVED: *Charles S. Pope*  
Charles S. Pope, AIA  
Supervising Architect, Historic Structures  
Western Office, Design and Construction  
National Park Service

DATE: *September 18, 1964*